



78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan

Public Workshop and Community Involvement

Summary Report

April, 2009

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For Clark County

Public Workshop Purpose and Format

Clark County held the 78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan Public Workshop on Thursday, April 9, 2009 at Gaiser Middle School, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Over 160 community members attended the event.

The purpose of the 78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan Public Workshop was to share the project guiding principles and current and considered uses for the site, and to collect feedback on public preferences for other site uses that will help to inform and establish a concept plan.

Meeting format

Introduction and Presentations

Members of the public arrived at the beginning of the meeting, were asked to sign in, and received handouts about the 78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan. Clark County Commissioner Marc Boldt welcomed community members and presented a brief history of the property and how the project came about.



Mark McCauley, Clark County General Services Director, made a presentation which included a brief background of the project and overview of the process, guiding principles, and potential uses of the site. Community members were then given an opportunity to ask clarifying questions.

Informal Information Sharing

The welcome and presentation were followed by an informal information sharing break with refreshments. Participants were invited to informally share information at various stations around the room. Sounding Board members staffed informational displays which featured potential uses by category, including community uses; sustainable farm, food and garden; educational uses; and historic preservation. The objective of this activity was to provide information to all workshop attendees about concepts currently being considered, and to explore any new ideas. Attendees were free to visit each of the displays to learn more about the uses that interested them, and to ask questions of staff, sounding board members and other stakeholders sharing information at displays.

Small Group Discussions

Workshop attendees then gathered into small groups for a facilitated discussion regarding the site, and were asked to generate a list of preferred uses, concerns, and ideas for other uses or suggestions. Each group was provided with a large site map and background data for the discussion along with note taking materials. Ideas were recorded on flipcharts. At the conclusion of the small group work, group leaders gave brief summary reports on preferred uses, concerns and new ideas generated during the discussion.

Conclusion and Preferences Exercise

At the end of the workshop, a brief presentation was made to wrap-up and provide information on the next steps for developing the 78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan. Participants were provided with colored adhesive dots, and asked to place them onto the displays used for the information sharing session; marking their personal preferred uses for the site.

Summary of Public Comments

Members of the public were invited to share feedback through a number of mechanisms, which included:

- Preference Exercise at April 9 Public Workshop
- Online comment form, available at the 78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan project website: www.clark.wa.gov/78WSU. Input was solicited beginning on March 21, 2009.
- Small Group Discussions at April 9 Public Workshop
- Paper comment forms provided at the April 9 Public Workshop

The following pages summarize comments and feedback generated through these public involvement activities.

Comments from Preference Exercise

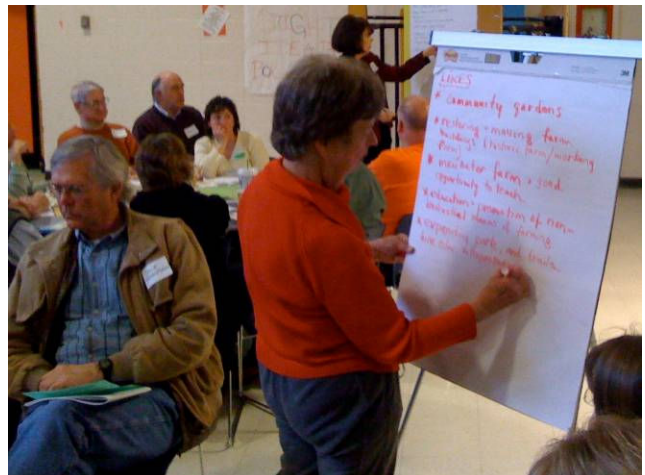
At the conclusion of the April 9 workshop, each participant was given twelve adhesive dots, and instructed to place them on a chart to indicate the concepts or ideas that they like most. The chart included all potential and permanent uses identified for the 78th Street/WSU property. The tally below shows the total number of dots placed for each potential use. Please note: These results reflect the preferences of those people attending. A low number of dots placed on some uses does not automatically eliminate these uses from future consideration. This exercise was not intended to represent a scientific polling, as some attendants placed many dots and others did not participate at all. This is just one means to gauge public preference of the 78th Street/WSU property potential uses. *For complete results and charts from this activity, please review the Preferences Exercise Appendix.*

The most popular potential uses identified by workshop participants include:

- Farming and garden demonstrations (52 dots)
- Community Gardens (48 dots)
- Multi-modal path/trail (42 dots)
- Relocate WSU Extension offices to the 78th Street/WSU site (42 dots)
- Food bank (41 dots)
- Agricultural education center (39 dots)
- Restore existing Poor Farm buildings (39 dots)

The least popular uses include:

- Viewpoint shelter (0 dots)
- Lease land for commercial farming (0 dots)
- Relocate Kapus Farm (0 dots)
- Transfer wooden silo (4 dots)
- Produce stand (4 dots)
- Restaurant (5 dots)
- Improve 68th Street (6 dots)
- Expand Hazel Dell Park (6 dots)



Preference Exercise: Summary chart of participant preferred uses

	Potential and Permanent Uses	Number of Dots
Community use/ recreation elements	Restaurant	5
	Meeting Space	10
	Multi-Modal path/trail	42
	Commercial kitchen/classroom	31
	Improve 68 th Street	6
	Viewpoint Shelter	0
	Demonstration Farm	15
	Sherriff's office substation	8
	Expand Hazel Dell Park	6
Education elements	Teach farming	32
	Agricultural Education Center	39
	Farming/garden demonstrations	52
	Outdoor community learning for local schools	31
	Wetland and riparian area demonstrations	21
	Rain/surface water demonstrations	14
Sustainable farm, food and garden elements	Food co-op	16
	Produce stand	4
	Farmers market	28
	Farming incubator/start-up	21
	Lease land for commercial farming	0
	Replace Master Gardener greenhouses	37
	Community gardens	48
	Hillside plantings	7
	Food bank	41
	Relocate WSU Extension offices	42
Historic preservation elements	Relocate Kapus Farm	0
	Transfer wooden silo	4
	Restore existing Poor Farm buildings	39
	Preserve Poor Farm Cemetery	35

New Ideas Generated

Participants generated and shared new or other ideas for uses for the 78th Street/WSU property through the information sharing and small group discussion sessions. Some of these ideas are listed here. *A full list is available in the Preferences Exercise appendix.*

- Commercial kitchen/food processing center (educational, added value)
- Canning/preserving lessons
- Agriculture research
- Small scale livestock

- Natural playground areas
- Designate school sites for community garden plots
- Grow food for local school lunches
- Community mentoring program connecting elders and youth
- Outdoor farming school for kids
- Organic community garden plots
- Educational partnerships
- Expand Hazel Dell Park west and Community and Recreation Center
- Earthen intimate garden amphitheatre (with seating for 300 people)
- Community center with “gathering place” emphasis

Technical Advisory Committee Executive Report (TACER)

In the fall of 2008, Clark County hired Deston Denniston, dba Abundance Consulting, to coordinate a 9-day course in permaculture for a group of over twenty participants, who were known as the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Guest lecturers provided education in ecological and permaculture design methods to this group, using the 78th Street/WSU property as a model. At the conclusion of the course, participants created a permaculture-based concept plan for the property. The intent of the TAC was to inform site planning.

At the April 9th meeting, Deston Denniston presented TAC-related materials during the preferences exercise. It was noted that the permaculture design concept received 66 dots demonstrating public support for this approach. As a result the Executive Report submitted on behalf of the TAC should be included in future organizational and strategic work in developing the recommendations and realizing the potential of the 78th Street/WSU site.

Comments from Small Group Discussions

During the small group discussions at the April 9 workshop, community members and facilitators discussed potential uses for the 78th Street/WSU property. Their discussion was centered on three questions:

1. Of the ideas discussed, what are the ones that you are most interested in and why?
2. Of the ideas discussed, which do you have concerns about?
3. Are there any ideas you didn't hear that you'd like to see?



Recorders took notes of participant responses to these questions on flip charts. The following is a summary of the responses, organized by themes and topics.

General Comments

Generally, workshop participants shared that the most important element of the 78th Street/WSU Property is that it should remain agricultural, focus on organic and sustainable gardening and food production, and tie into the local community. They also thought it was important that the property maintain a diversity of uses and inter-related purposes, such as gardens, food production, education, and community use. They would like the site to involve as many community members as possible, with a county-wide focus. One noted that the site could be a model of sustainability, to become a world class center that presents the chain from growing to selling, to preparing food.

Preferred Uses

Community Use/Recreation Elements

Of the community use and recreation elements discussed, workshop participants were most favorable towards the idea to develop a multi-modal path or trail, and to build a community commercial kitchen or classroom. Regarding the path or trail, they saw it as an excellent way for family and children to connect with nature, and a place for kids to play outdoors. They noted that it would be important to keep it accessible to everyone, and to include educational elements and interpretive signage. They also stressed that the area should remain as natural as possible, with unpaved trails, and not to bring in unnatural playground or park elements. They did, however, see a need for tables, benches and other low-impact amenities.

Many community members showed enthusiasm over the prospect of a community kitchen or classroom, which could provide cooking, food education, canning, preservation, and other types of classes to community members. Some also saw it as a potential source of revenue, and would like to see a kid-focus with summer recreation opportunities.

Other uses that were fairly popular included creating a restaurant, community center, and working demonstration farm. They noted that the restaurant should serve local food, be historical in nature, and include educational elements. They thought that the meeting space would be a good venue for community meetings, classrooms, and a community hall to serve meals or showcase local food. A handful of people also saw the viewpoint shelter as a favorable element.

Very few people found the inclusion of a police substation and improvements to 68th Street to be the most favorable uses.

Education Elements

Workshop participants were very favorable towards the education elements for the 78th Street/WSU Property. There were many general comments on education elements, noting that this should focus on non-industrial, organic gardening and food production. The most popular education elements included teaching commercial and personal farming, creating an education-based agricultural center, and implementing outdoor community learning programs.



Regarding teaching of commercial and personal farming, people were less interested or even opposed to commercial farming, but very interested in organic farming skills. They expressed interest in classes teaching self-sustainability of food production, how to farm and grow food, plant breeding, and seed saving. They would like these classes to be available for the public. They also discussed the idea of the education-based agricultural center, and liked the concept of demonstrating agriculture education, especially to families, children and school groups. Many participants also favor the youth education elements, and would like to see an educational partnership formed with public schools to provide field trips in farming and wetlands education, and an outdoor school.

Some of the less popular ideas include demonstrations by Master Gardeners, and developing wetland, aquaculture and storm water demonstrations.

Sustainable farm, food and garden elements

Workshop participants most preferred the community gardens, food bank, and farmers' market uses for the 78th Street/WSU property. Regarding the community gardens, participants saw this as a good tool for youth education, an opportunity to learn organic and biodynamic gardening, and an element to provide urban small-scale food production. They would also like to see involvement and opportunities for low-income community members and local schools.

Many showed preference towards locating a Food Bank on 78th Street, and creating on-site gardens to supply the food bank. They saw this as a positive means to provide healthy food to low-income families. They would like the building to be low-impact in nature, and to include offices, community rooms, and a kitchen for public use.

Many also supported the farmer's market concept, and a few noted that it should only be available for local food producers to sell their goods, not for artisans or non-local product sales. One suggested growing and selling flowers at the farmers market.

Several groups also showed preference towards ideas to start an incubator program for new farmers, and to relocate WSU Extension programs to the site. They noted that it was key for WSU to be involved, and hoped that their site would expand the small-farming programs. A few groups also advocated repairing the Master Gardener greenhouses, and hoped that larger greenhouses could be used by the public. Less popular preferred uses included creating a food co-op extension and produce stand.

Historic Preservation

Historic preservation elements were not discussed in detail by most groups, though a few did mention that preserving and celebrating the history of the site was important. A few groups did note that it was important to restore existing buildings, especially the main building and Poor Farm building. One group mentioned the preservation and interpretation of the Poor Farm Cemetery.

Concerns about Identified Potential Uses

The most common concerns vocalized by workshop participants centered around the idea to include a restaurant on the site, and leasing land to commercial farmers. While many did, in theory, support the idea to build a restaurant, they were concerned about how it would be implemented and about competition with other local restaurants. If implemented, they would like it to serve local food and be tied into the working farm aspects. A few noted that the land could be better used in

other ways than putting a restaurant on it. One group favored the restaurant idea if it would be a generator of income, or used as a place for community food classes or commercial kitchen for home-based local food production businesses.

Many were opposed to the idea of leasing some land to commercial farmers. They were afraid that this could lead to acres of mono-crops, or farming implemented strictly for profit with no organic farming principles. Many did not understand how commercial farm use ties into education or supports the project guiding principles.

Several groups also indicated concerns with transportation and parking, food bank implementation, nature preservation, and over-commercialization of the site. Regarding transportation, some expressed concern over increased traffic and safety issues on 68th Street. A couple of groups suggested a cap on the amount of land used for parking lots, and sharing parking with church. One group suggested increased transit service in the area.

While many groups supported the food bank idea, some were concerned over how it would be implemented. A few opposed the idea of an unappealing warehouse-style food bank that did not fit the architectural style of current buildings. One group suggested that the food bank be located at a different site to avoid the additional paving that this would create at the 78th Street/WSU site.

Some groups noted that more efforts should be taken to preserve natural areas and restore wetlands, and one pointed out that the plan does not even mention wildlife and conservation areas. Some would like to see more land left undisturbed or restored to a natural state, with minimal paving.

Several groups were concerned that the area would be come over-commercialized, and opposed any sort of commercial development or strip mall construction. A number of groups also discussed the aesthetics of new buildings and construction. They would like to keep in line with the architectural style of old buildings, and to follow green-building techniques in new construction.

A minority of groups showed concern over the proposed police station. They did not believe that this use follows the guiding principles, and thought it would be better located at a different site. Some groups also had questions about funding for the project and wondered where funding would come from to both develop and maintain the site.

A few groups had questions about oversight of the property. They wondered who would be in charge of overseeing implemented activities and uses, and whether future overseers would respect the guiding principles. One suggested that the property be managed by a community governed body.



Some other groups had concern that the proposed farmers market could compete with the downtown market or local small farms, and that it could increase traffic. The same concerns were brought up regarding the food co-op idea.

A couple of groups wanted clarification about the community center concept, and wondered if it met the guiding principles and reflected the values of the site. A couple of groups were also concerned about security and vandalism issues.

One group, which represented the mobile park residents living near the site, was concerned about drainage. There are currently drainage issues at the mobile home park currently because a ditch backs up and floods water into people's property.

Other uses and ideas

During the breakout sessions, some groups also generated new or other ideas for uses of the 78th Street/WSU property. The most popular suggestion was that the site should implement more revenue-generating aspects or become a business incubator. Some ideas included leasing garden plots, charging fees for renting market stalls, leasing classroom space to groups, seed saver and seed storage, and creating a memorial garden near the cemetery that could sell memorials such as bricks and trees.

Several groups were also in favor of greater agricultural research opportunities at the site. Some mentioned research for West Cascades, grant opportunities with the USDA, opportunities for a WSU-Vancouver partnership, and continuing research focused on northwest crops. A number of groups also suggested uses involving livestock and animals, such as a working animal farm, raising chickens and small-scale livestock, creating a petting zoo, and partnering with 4H.

Some other ideas included creating a living museum on site; creating a winery or hosting winery events; holding weddings and receptions at the site; planting fruit trees and orchards; allowing year-round small businesses such as the Dairy Women at fair; providing CSA use land for growing food; providing a wildlife habitat; creating a butterfly garden; encouraging bird watching; and encouraging low-income community support and services.

Some groups also discussed possible names for the site. These included: Poor Farm, Anderson Farm, Mountain View Farms, Cougar Creek Farms, Marblemount Farms, Hazel Dell Farms, and Old Poor Farm.

Mobile home park residents also suggested a program to provide adult volunteer assistance. They also suggested building a gate from the mobile home park to the 78th property, to have direct access to the walking trails.

Comments from Comment Forms

Twenty workshop participants turned in comment forms, and four turned in prepared letters.

Of those that responded, six indicated that they live near the 78th Street/WSU Property, and one indicated that she owns property or business in the area. None indicated that they work nearby.

Community use and recreation elements

Participants were asked to comment on the community use and recreation elements of the 78th Street/WSU property. Many were enthusiastic about the potential use to create a community kitchen or classroom, with a specific emphasis on teaching food preservation, food preparation, and food growing classes. One also suggested that WSU's renowned cheese experts, local beer experts, and wineries become involved and perhaps produce and sell their cheeses. Many also were strongly supportive of expanding the park and creating a multi-modal trail that could wind through planted gardens.

Several respondents were also enthusiastic about creating community gardens, and offering educational opportunities or attractions for schools. One suggested that the site include a children's garden or environmental education area similar to the Michigan State University 4H garden. Several participants also showed support for a community meeting space and working demonstration farm.

A couple of respondents supported the idea of a Food Bank, though one suggested changing the name "food bank" to a warmer title. A couple of people also liked the local foods restaurant concept, and one proposed that it be run by local students or the community. A couple of people also supported the police substation and viewpoint shelter uses.

Many respondents showed caution towards building a restaurant on the site, noting that many restaurants already exist in the area. Some also thought that it was not a prudent use of land to build more impermeable structures and adding more concrete.

Education elements

Participants were asked to comment on education elements of the 78th Street/WSU property. Many were supportive of all goals and proposed educational uses of the site. They were most enthusiastic about the agricultural education center and garden demonstration projects, citing a real need to teach citizens how to grow their own food. They also suggested classes or demonstrations in rainwater collection, composting, plant breeding, organic gardening, and plant variety selection. Some also suggested that the education elements target schools, and tie in with public schools and youth groups. One proposed that school groups visit the farm and its historic buildings as part of their history classes.

A couple of respondents hoped to see new farmer and small farm education components. Three were also interested in enhancing wetlands and providing water demonstration projects, with one suggesting that the WSU Master Gardener program lead this. One also suggested that new buildings be built on modular, high-rise concepts in order to save land space, and suggested consulting Will Macht's examples of inexpensive modular units.

Sustainable farm, food and garden elements

Participants were asked to comment on sustainable farm, food and garden elements of the 78th Street/WSU property. Many were supportive of replacing the Master Gardeners greenhouses, or

otherwise keeping the Master Gardeners program involved in the property. Many were also excited about the community gardening plots use, with one person commenting that this could be a small-scale revenue-generating opportunity. A few were also supportive of any learning programs and the farmer's market concept.

A couple of respondents showed concern for the co-op idea, noting that it would be better to have a more easily accessible food co-op located downtown. A couple of people were also opposed to any private interests in the area.

Historical preservation elements

Participants were asked to comment on the historical preservation elements of the 78th Street/WSU property. Most of those that left feedback for this question did not support this idea, citing that relocation of buildings was not a good use of funds, and doubted their real significant historical value. They also would like to see the land used for agriculture and gardening, rather than implementing more buildings and concrete. A couple of people did support the idea, one suggesting that these historic farm buildings be relocated to one central location. One suggested creating a memorial to the poor farm, and selling bricks for natural pathways for development revenue.

Preferences

Participants were asked to identify the potential uses and elements that they *most* prefer for the 78th Street/WSU property. The three uses most commonly referenced were agricultural education, community organic gardening, and the food bank. Many saw agricultural education as a key element to teaching people to feed themselves healthily, and to provide family-friendly classes. Respondents support the creation of community gardens, and many added that they should encourage only natural and organic-style gardening and include trails and pathways. Those people that preferred the Food Bank noted that this is a necessary use, as the current facility is very small, and a new facility could provide greater education opportunities.

Participants were also asked to identify the potential uses and elements that they *least* prefer for the 78th Street/WSU property. Those that responded generally cited that they least preferred those elements that required more paving and removing land from agricultural use. Most commonly they least preferred the building of a restaurant, Food Bank, or police substation for this reason. Others also noted that the community center and food co-op could be located elsewhere. A couple also noted that relocating buildings was not a good use of funds, specifically the Silo and Ridgefield buildings. Two also noted that he least preferred leasing land out to private or commercial interests that might not be interested in promoting organic and sustainable agriculture.

General Comments

Participants were also invited to share any additional comments on the 78th Street/WSU Concept Plan. A number of respondents indicated that the most important principle was to maintain the area as naturally as possible, with few permanent buildings, so that it could act as a future green respite. Some people were concerned with which entity would oversee the planning and implementation of this project; one suggested that citizens and the County should remain in control, not developers or private interests. Another noted that the concept plan would only be sustainable if it included a revenue generating enterprise, and suggested an ice cream stand or ice cream production facility. A couple of people also stressed the need for a memorial established for the cemetery, and one noted that the cemetery area offered revenue-generating opportunities. One noted the importance of integrating permaculture principles.

Comments from online form

Eleven people provided comments through the online comment form available on the 78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan project website.

All comments were generally very supportive of the 78th Street/WSU Property Concept Plan. A number of participants gave thanks for an opportunity to provide feedback. Some indicated their preferred uses for the site, most commonly citing agricultural preservation, food co-op, community gardens, agricultural education, and strengthening the Master Gardener greenhouses. One also indicated preference for the food bank, relocation of WSU Extension offices, restoration of the Poor Farm buildings and cemetery, and expansion of Hazel Dell Park. One showed strong support for the purpose and guiding principles of the project, and the importance of dedicating an area to Clark County's agricultural heritage. One suggested that the site become a garden farm and food co-op and given to the Vancouver Food Co-op. Another voiced support for retaining the NOAA (National Ocean Atmospheric Agency) which holds records used by farmers.